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PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

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PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.



By James Grant & Nelson

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PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

Sheridan, PHILIP HENRY, was born in Albany, New York, March 6, 1831, but a few weeks after the arrival of his Irish parents in the New World. After attending a public school in Ohio, to which state the family removed soon after his birth, he was employed for a time as a shop-boy. In July 1848 he was appointed a cadet at West Point, graduated in 1853, and was appointed a brevet second-lieutenant in the Third Infantry. In May 1861 he was a captain in the Thirteenth Infantry, and in December of that year he was made chief quartermaster of the army in southwestern Missouri. In April 1862 he became chief quartermaster under General Halleck; but in May he was given a regiment of cavalry (the Second Michigan), and, being now in his proper sphere, did such excellent work that he was soon promoted to the command of a brigade, and then to a division of the Army of the Ohio. In the battle of Perryville (8th October), and still more in the battle of Stone River (Murfreesboro'), which ended on 3d January 1863, and where his division lost over 1600 men, he performed brilliant services, and earned his promotion to major-general of volunteers. He took part in the severe battle of Chickamauga, from which field the Northern army fell back within the defences of Chattanooga, and there, serving now under the immediate command of General Grant, he was engaged in all the operations of the campaign that followed, gaining especial credit for the dash and gallantry with which his division drove the enemy up the slope and over the summit of Mission Ridge. Soon afterwards transferred to Virginia, in April 1864 he was given command of all the cavalry of the Army

of the Potomac, took part in the battle of the Wilderness, and made a notable raid (May 9-25) on the Confederate lines of communication with Richmond, advancing to the outer defences of that city, cutting railroads, destroying depôts, and on the 11th defeating the enemy's cavalry at Yellow Tavern with the loss of their commander, General Stuart. In the same month he was first into Cold Harbor, and in June took part in the heavy battle there, and fought a number of cavalry actions. In all these his dash and skill attracted Grant's admiration, and in August he placed Sheridan in command of the Army of the Shenandoah, giving him two cavalry divisions commanded by Generals Torbert and Wilson. The task set him was to drive the Confederates out of the Shenandoah Valley and to close this gate into Pennsylvania and Maryland. In September he attacked the enemy under General Early, drove them through and many miles beyond Winchester, and captured 5000 prisoners and 5 guns; and from Fisher's Hill, where Early halted, he again dislodged him, and pursued him through Harrisonburg and Staunton. These battles made him a brigadier-general in the regular army. But Early's army, being largely reinforced by General Lee, again appeared in the Shenandoah Valley, and on October 19, advancing under cover of fog and darkness, succeeded in surprising the Northern army and driving it back in confusion. Sheridan had been in Washington, and at this time was at Winchester, twenty miles away. Hearing the guns, he put his horse to its speed, and arrived on the field by ten o'clock, waving his hat and shouting to the retreating troops, 'Face the other way, boys; we are going back.' His unexpected appearance restored confidence, the lines were re-formed, and a serious defeat was suddenly converted into a great victory. The enemy's left was soon routed, the rest shared their fate, and the Confederates were again, and finally, driven from the valley, which Sheridan, by Grant's orders, now devastated. For Winchester he was promoted to major-general and received the thanks of congress, and Grant's armies fired a salute of 100 guns in honour of the victory.

Henceforward Sheridan fought always under Grant's direct command, and took an active part in the final battles which led to Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court-house, April 9, 1865. His ability as a general was nowhere better displayed than in the action at Dinwiddie Court-house and

the assault of Five Forks in March and April, which drove Lee from Petersburg and Richmond. After the war Sheridan was placed in command of the military division of the Gulf, and later of the department of the Missouri. When Grant became president of the United States General Sherman was made general-in-chief and Sheridan promoted to lieutenant-general. In 1870 the latter visited Europe to witness the conduct of the Franco-German war, and was with Von Moltke during the battle of Gravelotte. On the retirement of Sherman in 1883 he succeeded him as general-in-chief. In May 1888 Sheridan became seriously ill, and a bill was speedily passed by both Houses of Congress restoring for him the full rank and emoluments of general. He died at his country-house in Nonquitt, Massachusetts, August 5, 1888, leaving a widow and three children. He was buried at Arlington, Virginia, within sight of Washington, where a beautiful monument marks his grave.

Sheridan was the nineteenth general-in-chief of the United States army. He never lost a battle, and the confidence and affection which 'Little Phil,' as they delighted to call him, inspired, in his troops may be gauged by the story of Winchester. Among the Northern generals he ranks second only to Grant and Sherman. See his *Personal Memoirs* (2 vols. 1888).

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